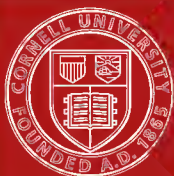


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THE IMAGE

BY

LADY GREGORY

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THE IMAGE: A PLAY
IN THREE ACTS

PERSONS

THOMAS COPPINGER	.		<i>A Stonecutter.</i>
MARY COPPINGER	.	.	<i>His Wife.</i>
MALACHI NAUGHTON	.		<i>A Mountainy Man</i>
BRIAN HOSTY	.	.	<i>A Small Farmer.</i>
DARBY COSTELLO	.	.	<i>A Seaweed Hawker</i>
PEGGY MAHON	.	.	<i>An Old Midwife.</i>
PETER MANNION	.	.	<i>A Carrier.</i>

THE IMAGE

ACT I

Scene: A village street with a thatched house on either side, both whitewashed, one very poor. Grey sea and grey hills seen beyond a wall of loose stones. Some headstones are propped against the wall, one inscribed "ERECTED FOR THOMAS COPPINGER AND POSTERITY." Coppinger is looking at it. Mrs. Coppinger, with her back to him, is looking out over wall.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Putting out clothes to dry on the wall.*) If we heard noises in the night time I heard a great silence now. I was looking out to see what was it ailed the place. What has happened all the neighbours I wonder?

Coppinger: I was wondering that myself. I don't see Brian Hosty or Darby Costello in any place, or anyone at all only Malachi Naughton, the crazy mountainy man, is coming hither from the strand.

(He sits down and chips at headstone.)

Mrs. Coppinger: It is a queer thing you to be content, Thomas Coppinger, and you knocking out a living among the dead. It is no way content I myself would be, and to be following a trade that is all for gloom.

Coppinger: It is not, but in the world wide there is not so lively or so pleasant a trade. Wait now till I'll sound that out to you. A man to be a herd now, and to be sent back out of the fair with beasts, the very time the sport would begin, or to be landing fish from a hooker and to be made take the tide at the very minute maybe the crowds would be gathering for a race, or an assizes, or a thing of the kind, it is downhearted you would be coming into your own little place, and all the stir left after you. But to be turning back from a burying, and you living, and all that company lying dumb, and the rain coming down through the clay over their heads, and their friends crying them, that is the time your own little cabin would shine out as good as a wake house, in the time a wake house was all one with a dance house.

Mrs. Coppinger: That is not so in this place. No playing or funning or springing, but to be talking they do be, stupid talk about themselves and to be smoking tobacco.

Coppinger: And another thing. It is very answerable to the soul to be always letting your

mind dwell on them that are gone to dust and to ashes, and to be thinking how short they were in the world, and to be striving to put yourself in terror of eternity. "Vanity of vanities," said King Solomon, and he owning all his riches and his own seven hundred wives.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's time for you give in to my asking, and to bring me away to the States, and the work all wore away from you, the way you have no earthly thing to put your hand to but that headstone of your own. There doesn't be so many wakes as there were, or so many buryings, or the half of the people in the world that there used to be.

Coppinger: The headland is a very wholesome place, without killing or murdering, and the youngsters all go foreign, and in my opinion the dead are nearly all dead—unless it might be old Peggy Mahon within in the house beyond.

Mrs. Coppinger: With all the children she brought home to the world, and all the women she saved from being brought away, she is near spun out herself. There are some would give the world to be gone altogether with the state she is in. And it's time for her to go anyway. Cross she is and peevish, and in troth she'd be no great loss.

Coppinger: Let you not be talking that way. It never was a habit of my habits to wish any harm to a neighbour, or to call down misfortune on them at all.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's a poor job to be lettering out your own name and for no profit. And you should be near done by this anyway. "In memory of Thomas Coppinger and Posterity." What is there to put to that but the day of your death, that it would fail you to have foreknowledge of, and the day it's likely you have no remembrance of, that you made your own start on the plains of this world.

Coppinger: That is not enough. That is what has to be put on the slab of many a common man, where he did no big thing, or never stretched a hand to the poor.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what will there be to write on your own slab, more than that you lived and died on the Munster side of the headland of Druim-na-Cuan, and knocked out a poor way of living, hammering at hard stones?

Coppinger: No fear of me being left that way. Some thing will come to pass. Some great man might come wanting a monument that would put up my name for ever. Some man so great his death would put away laughter in Ireland.

Mrs. Coppinger: Ah! If it is waiting you are for such a one to die, sure you don't know is he

born at all yet, or his father or his grandfather, or at what time he might be born through the next two thousand years. You are talking as wild as a dream might fall upon you in the night time.

Coppinger: There is dreams and dreams. And at every thousand years some great thing is apt to happen, such as the Deluge or the coming of the Milesians into Ireland—I tell you there is dreams and dreams. (*Turns and chips away at headstone.*)

(*Malachi comes in slowly L. and blinks at them.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: Well, Malachi Naughton, God bless your health, and what's the best news with you? You have the appearance of getting bad nourishment. They were telling me your hens were all ate with the fox. I wonder now you wouldn't quit the mountain side, and come make your dwelling in some place there would be company.

Malachi: The towns do be in uproar and do be crowded, and the roads do be wet and wide; and as to the villages, there is spies in them, and traitors, and people you wouldn't like to be talking with. Too venomous they are and too corrupted with drink. I'd like to keep my own company, and I to have no way of living but the berries of the bush.

Mrs. Coppinger: There is no crowd in this place to-day, and no person at all to be heard or to be seen.

Malachi: That wasn't so a while ago. (*Turning to Coppinger.*) Tell me, Thomas Coppinger, did you hear e'er a noise in the night time?

Coppinger: What way wouldn't I hear it? Thunder it's likely it was that was breaking from the clouds and from the skies, the same as it did ere yesterday, the time the Kerry men's hooker was destroyed out from Galway. It's likely the weather will cheer up now, the thunder having brought away the venom out of the air.

Malachi: The clouds of the air had no hand in it at all. Thunder is natural. I tell you it is more than thunder came visiting this place last night.

Mrs. Coppinger: I was thinking myself it was no thunder. It was more like the roaring of calves, or the drowning of hundreds, or all the first cousins coming racing with their cars to a wedding after dark.

Coppinger: (*Rises and looks over wall.*) Have it your own way so. I'll go meet Brian and Darby, and they'll tell you was it thunder. I see Brian coming hither over the ridge is above the cliffs. Have you my boots cleaned, Mary, till I'll put them on to my feet?

(*He goes into house.*)

Malachi: It was no thunder was in it, but the night that was full of signs and of wonders.

Mrs. Coppinger: What is it makes you say that? I didn't see any wonder you'd call a wonder. It's likely it is in your own head the wonders were.

Malachi: A little bird of a cock I have, that started crowing in the dark hour of the night, the same as if the dawn had come and put him in mind of Denmark.

Mrs. Coppinger: A cock to crow out of season is no great wonder, and he to be perched on the rafters, and you maybe to be turning yourself on your palliasse, that would be creaking with the nature of the straw.

Malachi: Great noises I heard after that, as if of tearing and splashing and roaring through the tide.

Mrs. Coppinger: I heard them myself as good as you. I was in dread it might be the day of judgment. To put my head in under the quilt I did, till such time as it had passed away.

Malachi: It was not quieted till after the whitening of the dawn in the skies. I went out at that time thinking to see the goat that was up to her kidding time, and she had the rope broke, and the stone thrust away that was in the door of the little pen I had made, and there was no sight or mind of her.

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it searching after her yet you are, or did you find her gone astray among the rocks?

Malachi: Down by the brink of the sea I found her, a place she never was apt to go, and two young kids beside her, she that never had but the one before; and more than that again——

Mrs. Coppinger: You'll be in Heaven, she to have kidded, the way you'll have a drop of milk with your tea.

Malachi: Two young kids beside her on the salt edge of the tide, and she chewing neither dulse, or carrageen, or seaweed, but lying in full content, and as if browsing upon a little bit of a board.

Mrs. Coppinger: Goats will eat all. There was a neighbour's goat mounted up on my own dresser one time, and made as if to devour the blessed palm was on the wall.

Malachi: Did ever you hear up to this, Mrs. Coppinger, a beast to have got nourishment from a board?

Mrs. Coppinger: I did to be sure. Isn't it the way the body of Blessed Columcille was tracked the time it was sent back across the sea to Ireland for its burying? To sculpture directions on a stick they did, and it was a cow went licking it the time it was come to land. It is likely you heard that yourself?

Malachi: (*Going to her and drawing a board from under his ragged shirt.*) You that can read writing, ma'am, sound out to me now the testimony is on that board.

Mrs. Coppinger: So there is a name on it in painted printing—H, H, u, g, h—Hugh—Hugh O'Lorrha.

Malachi: Hugh O'Lorrha—I was thinking, and I was near certain, the time I saw the letters it was the name of some person was in it, that had sent some message into my hand. Tell me now, ma'am, have you any account at all, or did ever you hear it told who was Hugh O'Lorrha?

Mrs. Coppinger: It seems to me to have heard such a name, but I can put no face to it or no account. There's many things I forgot that I heard in my lifetime. I only recollect things in the broad. (*Shades her eyes and looks out over wall.*)

Malachi: There should be some meaning in it and some message. No doubt about it at all, it was a night full of wonders—Down in the tide there to be the noise as of hundreds, the bird in the rafters making its own outcry, and its call—the goat to be bringing me to that bit of a board—Hugh O'Lorrha, that should be a very high sounding name. What it is at all he is calling to me, and bidding me for to do?

(*Brian Hosty comes in.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Turning to door.*) Come out here, Thomas. Here is Brian Hosty before you.

Coppinger: (*Coming out.*) There is no need for me go seek him so. Well, now, Brian, didn't you go abroad very early this morning?

Hosty: It's easy rise up and go abroad early the time there does disturbance come, that will put away the sleep from your eyes.

Coppinger: You heard the noises so?

Hosty: What would ail me not to hear them? You would hear that roaring three mile off, as well as you would hear it a mile.

Mrs. Coppinger: Was it a fleet of seals maybe was coming in against the rough weather does be prophesied in the skies?

Hosty: Did any one ever hear a fleet of seals to be giving out a sound like eight eights crying together, or like the seven banshees of Lisheen Crannagh? You to have seen those two beasts fighting through the tide, you would know them not to be seals. Tearing and battling they were. At the time they commenced roaring I went out, and Darby Costello rose up and put the crowbar to his own door, in dread they might be coming into the house.

Mrs. Coppinger: Beasts is it? Tell me now what were they at all.

Hosty: Whales they were—two of them—they never quitted fighting one another till they came up upon the strand, and the salt water went and left them, that you would be sorry to hear them crying and moaning.

Coppinger: And is it on the strand they are presently?

Hosty: They are, and it is on the Connacht side of the headland they took their station, as was right.

Coppinger: Take care but the tide might steal up on them. But I suppose they are dead by this?

Hosty: What would hinder them from being dead? I am after going where they are, myself and Darby Costello. To cut a bit off of one of them I did. The flesh of it was like the dribbled snow, the same as a pig you would kill and would be after cleaning out for hanging, as clean and as white as that. And as for size, you to go up on them, you could see the whole of Galway.

Mrs. Coppinger: Would you say there to be oil in them? I heard in some place the oil would be rendered out of a whale would carry a big price.

Hosty: Oil is it? I took a wisp of straw and lighted it at the side of one of them, and the oil of it went out into the sea, and never mixing with the salt water at all. The whole of the lakes of Ireland and the wide Shannon along with them,

there is enough of oil in those two whales to make a scum and a covering over the whole of their brim.

Mrs. Coppinger: That now is maybe the luck, Thomas, you were thinking would be drawing towards you. Gather now all the vessels in the place till we'll see what we can bring away of oil. Here now is the tub, and the big pot, and the kettle.

Hosty: I heard one time there was a doctor back in Connemara gave a pound a gallon for the oil was rendered out of a whale. To cure ulcers and cancers I suppose it did, the same as king's blood used to cure the evil.

Mrs. Coppinger: That's a whip of money! Let me see can I empty the milk out of the churn.

(Mr. and Mrs. Coppinger go into house.)

Malachi: *(Coming near.)* Whales? Did you say it was whales came visiting this strand in the night time?

Hosty: Amn't I after saying that it was?

Malachi: What was it now brought those beasts to be travelling to this headland more than to any other place, and to find their own track to it across the wide ocean?

Hosty: What would bring them but chance, or ignorance or the blindness that came on them with the strokes they were striking and hitting at one another under the waves,

Malachi: It was those beasts so, brought that name and that board of timber. Who now in the wide earthly world will tell me who was Hugh O'Lorrha? (*Goes off.*)

Hosty: (*To Mrs. Coppinger, who has come to door.*) What at all is Malachi raving about, Mrs. Coppinger, with his cracked talk and his questioning?

Mrs. Coppinger. Ah, that is the way he is, and something gone queer in his head. There is nothing left to him in life but high flighty thoughts.

Hosty: (*Looking at vessels.*) Well, Mrs. Coppinger, it's a share of the good things of the world you will be getting this time surely. It's to quit stone-cutting you will bring Thomas Coppinger that time.

Coppinger: (*Leaning out over door.*) No fear of me, Brian. Did ever you find east or west any place at all I broke my word? And isn't it long I promised you to print your own headstone and to dress it for you, the time your end would be drawing near?

Hosty: I'm very thankful to you, Thomas. I am thinking it is a good while you are putting off making an end and a finish of your own slab.

Coppinger: There is reason in that, I am thinking I might get a name yet would look bigger and handsomer on my tomb.

Hosty: Whatever way you may write out your name or raise it, it will be but Thomas Copping in the end.

Mrs. Copping: It might not. Look at all that voted for the Parliament going from College Green to England, and that went to bed nothing and rose up lords in the morning! I would like well Thomas to be a lord, with two hundred acres of land.

Hosty: Well, it's the people of Munster are taken up in themselves with pride and with conceit! My joy that I was not reared among them, but in the bright beautiful province of Connacht!

Mrs. Copping: Let you keep your great praises of Connacht and your talk for them are the other side of the earth and cannot see into it, as I myself can see it over the mering wall, and the fields that are all a flag, and the thistles as hardy as our own and as bold. It is not here I myself would wish to stop, in a narrow barren place, where you never would get your fill of the world's joy. It's out to America I would go, and a fair wind blowing!

Hosty: I know well what it is you are dreaming to find before you in the States—beer from Denmark, honey out of Greece; rings and brooches and such things as are dear to women; high blood and grandeur and ringing of bells; a silver cushion

having four edges, and you sitting on it through the day time the same as the Queen of Pride, and talking of the ways of the world and the war! But remember now I was in America one time myself!

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't there be grandeurs and good houses in Boston or in New York where many a bright pound was spent upon them?

Hosty: All the grandeurs I saw was never the face of a fire but only a black stove, and not a chimney in the house but only a crooked pipe, and never a spring well but rotten water brought from the Lord knows where, and no way for going out unless you would take a stroll in a street car. And if there was quality food I didn't see it, or a bit of butter that was sweet!

Coppinger: (Leaning in the half door.) Let you leave challenging one another, and look at Darby Costello is running like a heifer had got a pick of a fly, or a rat there would be strong cats following.

Mrs. Coppinger. (Jumps up.) Ask him what will he do with his share of the oil, and see will he be able to make a choice, besides putting insults on his next-door neighbour!

(Costello runs in breathless.)

Hosty: Tell me now what will be your own choice thing out of the spending and the profit of the oil?

Mrs. Coppinger: Let you choose some big thing will set you free from drawing seaweed till the day of judgment!

Costello: I am striving to tell you that the whales——

Mrs. Coppinger: Tell us out quick now, what is your desire and your choice.

Costello: Ah, now, what is my desire but peace and patience and to give no offence, or have any one annoying me, but there to be no law but love—and if I have another thing to ask it is leave to make my voice heard for one minute only, till you'll hear what I'm striving to tell——●

Coppinger: A pound a gallon we are to get out of the oil! It's the whole of us will get our chance!

Costello: Ah, quit talking till I'll tell you— It is little profit you will be getting for yourselves, where the whole country entirely is gathered at this time about the whales. In boats they are come from every side. Drawing lots for strips of them they are, the same as if they were seaweed on the sand.

Hosty: They have no call to them at all! It is we ourselves were the first to find them and to put our mark upon their skin. Did you stand up to them telling them that?

Costello: It isn't easy stand up to a throng of them. From Oranmore they are come I tell you

and from Finevara and Duras and Ballindereen. The Kerry men were wrecked in the hooker were in it along with them, very wicked looking they were.

Hosty: They have no claim at all to be coming to our headland and to be bringing away our prey.

Costello: I was striving to say that much to them, fair and civil; and the face they put on themselves was not the face of a friend would be drinking porter with you, but of an enemy would be coming at you with a gun. To fire a stone at me a one of them did, and they wouldn't leave me till now in the living world if I didn't run. There were rocks threw after me all the length of the road.

(Mrs. Coppinger goes into house.)

Hosty: Give me a hold of a reaping hook till I'll go sweep them before me from where they are, and drive them under the sway of the living fishes of the sea!

Coppinger: (Picking up tools.) It is with my own hammer and my chisel I will tackle them! Leave your hand on a fork, Darby, or a spade, or so much as a big wattle of a stick; and let one of ye be humming Lord Byron's march, and he going out to war!

Hosty: We'll put terror on them! We'll banish them!

Costello: (*Sitting down.*) Devil a fear of me! I had my enough, thinking as I did that I had not three minutes to live. There is nothing is worse than your own life, and what call have you to go losing it?

Coppinger: I never would go back before any enemy at all so long as my life would last! I tell you I never felt so merry in my life, and no bad bones about me. I wouldn't be afraid of the worst thing you could meet, a bee coming to sting you, or whatever it might be!

Costello: I wouldn't face them again, I to get all the whales of the big ocean. I tell you they are hardy lads. There's few of the police would like to grabble with them.

Coppinger: It is crippled and crapped you are with age, Darby the way you do be failing in your walk!

Costello: I am up to no such great age, but my feet that are sore with all they sweated. But it's you yourself is getting very slack in your work and very attentive to your bed.

Coppinger: Is it that you are saying I am an old spent man? I'm not so old at all! I'm not as old as the hills of Gowra, whatever age that is! I'm not up to the age of Brian Hosty that has not hardly a blade of hair on his head, and has lost the whole of his teeth,

Hosty: Leave your finger in my mouth till you'll see did I lose my teeth!

(Peter Mannion comes in.)

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it for commands you are come, Peter Mannion, and you going with your car to the town?

Mannion: The priest and the waterguard are after going where there is a gathering of strange lads around and about the two dead fishes on the strand.

Coppinger: Sure it's to sweep the whole troop of them into the sea we are going out at this minute.

Mannion: The priest and the waterguard has them banished back to their own parish and their own district. To give them great abuse his reverence did, and the waterguard threatened them with the law.

Coppinger: Is it to drive them away clear and clean they did?

Mannion: Every whole one of them, big and little.

Coppinger: It's the priest is well able to break a gap before him and to put justice and profit into the hands of his own congregation!

Hosty: To respect the first that came to the whales he will.

Mannion: It is what I was bid say, there is none of ye at all will get any hold of the whales.

Coppinger: What's that you're saying? And a miracle after coming for to bring me my chance?

Mannion: The priest and the waterguard has laid down that the whole of the gain and the riches within in those two beasts of the sea, is not to be made over to this one or to that one, or to be made any man's profit and his prize, but to be laid out for the good and for the benefit of the whole of the headland, and of this point.

Hosty: It is to the Connacht side they landed. It wouldn't be right giving the Munster side any share.

Mrs. Coppinger: We should give in, so, I suppose and to put up with the loss. It's best not vex a priest or to rub against him as all.

Mannion: Which now of ye is the oldest?

Hosty: What meaning have you asking that?

Mannion: It is what I was bid say, there must some plan be made up without delay, for the spending of whatever will come from the whales. "It is the oldest inhabitant," says the priest, "should be best able to give out judgment as to that,"—and then the waterguard——

Hosty: To make out a plan for the spending is it? That should be a great lift to any person.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Taking Coppinger's arm and pushing him forward.*) Rise up now, Thomas Coppinger, and make your claim. You should be the most ageable person in the place, you are far before seventy years.

Mannion: The waterguard that said then——

Hosty: (*Pushing him away.*) He is not the most ageable, but I that am older than himself. Look at the way he is fresh and flushy in the features, and no way racked looking the same as myself.

(*Mannion sits down and lights pipe.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: No, but tossed hair you are putting on yourself, and a cross face, the way you would look to be old. You to be minding and cleaning yourself you'd keep your youth yet. Tell them out now, Thomas, your age.

Coppinger: What way could I say what age I am? When you are up to seventy year you wouldn't feel the years passing. I'm telling no lie saying that, no more than if I was on my knees to the priest.

Hosty: I to have said you were passed your three score a half hour ago, it's likely you'd fly in my eye; but you have the tune changed now as quick as any piper.

Coppinger: It's likely I have sixty years, and seventy years and another seventy along with

them if it was counted right. But you yourself are but upon the bruff of age. Look at you as straight as a ribbon!

Hosty: If I am straight, it is because there is more spirit in the Connacht men than in the Munster tribe, and more of a name for decency! I can remember when you'd walk out as far as the strand to catch soles and turbot and every quality fish, before the trawlers had them all destroyed.

Costello: No, but my mother that remembered my brother falling on me in the cradle, and hiding in the bushes all the day in dread of her. And he was seventy-three when he died.

Hosty: Ah, you weren't any age much that time at all. It is suppler you are than the whole of us. But I myself was six months the time of the big storm, and *that* can tell no lie.

Costello: My dearest life! Sure I remember the big wind myself and all that went before it, if it wasn't I was so neglectful and so heedless in my early time.

Coppinger: My mother, God rest her soul, that I heard saying I had a year more than Brian Hosty. And *she* remembered the landing of the French at Killala.

Hosty: She did, and the Danes being driven out from Ireland I suppose, and the band playing Brian Boru's march!

(Peggy Mahon appears at her cabin door.)

Mrs. Coppinger: There now is Peggy Mahon can settle the case. There is no person has knowledge of years only herself, where the dates are away and astray, she being such an old resident and drawing to a hundred years. Come out here to us now, Peggy Mahon, and at the fall of night I won't leave you without a drop of milk for your tea.

Coppinger: Ah, she is shook this long time. Where's the use making any appeal to her, and she having but old stories and vanities.

Hosty: Look at here now, ma'am. Didn't you give aid to my own three sons coming into the world, that are at this time buried in Minnesota? And my daughter that is looking at her children's children in Australia? And at that time I was up in age.

Costello: *(Pulling Hosty away from Peggy.)* Look, ma'am, isn't it three score years since you coming to the house the time my first young son was born? And it is what you said, that he was a present from God.

Peggy: So he was, so he was. Every baby is a present from God, it is for God we should attend

it. It is God puts you into the world and brings you out of it, and beyond that there is a woman in the stars does all.

Coppinger: It is not well in the mind she is, and not remembering.

Peggy: I remember, I remember. Lonesome after the old times I am. I am always remembering bye and bye.

Coppinger: Cast back your mind so, to how many score years is it since you came attending the first wife I had, before I joined with herself secondly in marriage.

Peggy: There is no second marriage, there is but the one marriage. He that was the best comrade, of a hasty man, God Almighty ever put a hand to, was brought away from me with little provocation twenty and half a hundred years ago. Brought away through death he was from this white world, and I myself left after him, a bird alone.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*To Costello.*) The talk she does be always making about Patrick Mahon, you would say, listening to her, he was mostly the pride of the headland. And he but a poor-looking little creature they were telling me, and having an impediment in his speech.

Costello: Old she is, and it's all in her brain the things she does be talking of.

Coppinger: And what way now will a judgment be made, and a decree, which of us should be leader?

Mannion: (*Getting up.*) It's time for you hearken to my news. The priest said the oldest man, and the waterguard said the three oldest, and the two of them agreed that if ye would agree they themselves would agree to that. I'll be coming again, where I have to bring the plan ye will lay out, to put before the Board of Guardians that are sitting on this day, so soon as I'll put the tacklings on the horse. (*Goes.*)

Coppinger: I might be going to get my chance in the heel. Wait now till I'll lay my mind to it for a while.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what is your own mind, Brian Hosty, you that are my near neighbour and my most enemy? Show us now what the intellect and the wit of the Connacht man can do.

Hosty: I would not tell a lie for one or for two, and I declare now and nearly take my oath, that I to have my choice thing and the riches of Damer the Chandler, it is what I would wish, this little dry stone wall to be swept from this village where I live to my grief and my sorrow, and a ditch to be dug from the Shannon to the sea, would divide the two provinces, and would be wide enough and bulky enough to drown every

chattering word of the cranky women of Munster, and let me hear nothing but the sweet-voiced women of Connacht, from now to the womb of judgment.

Costello: Oh, now, Brian Hosty, that is a very unneighbourly way to be saying such unruly words, that wouldn't be said hardly by the poorest person would be walking the road.

Hosty: Tell out your own request so, and see will it give satisfaction, since you are so crabbed to be correcting myself.

Costello: I wouldn't like to be going against any person at all. I would sooner to leave it to a committee.

Hosty: So you would too, and you being every man's man. And its time for Coppinger to speak his mind, if his wife will but give him leave.

Coppinger: Every man to his trade—and I would like well to keep to my own trade—It is on stones my mind is dwelling and on rocks.

Mrs. Coppinger: Let you break up so and make an end of the rocks in the harbour where the Kerry men's hooker was broke up. To come against one of them it did, and never left it but in little sticks. A danger to ships they would be, and any ships to be coming in to the pier. They to be out of it, what would hinder ships coming in the way you could set out from this street to go to

America or around the world? You wanting some big thing to do, there you have it to your hand—The harbour of New York there beyond, and the harbour of Druim-na-Cuan to be here and the one ocean to be serving the two of them!

Hosty: (Laughing.) You have a great notion, Mrs. Coppinger what sort the harbour of New York is, and you thinking to make the like of it in this place, with sails and steamers drawing in from the world entirely, and the statue of Liberty standing up high before you.

(Malachi comes in and sits down at Peggy's door.)

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't there be a statue? A statue is a thing does be put in many a place. Sure you can see one to Saint Joseph, Protector of the souls in Purgatory, all the same as life across the bay.

Hosty: And Thomas Coppinger that is thinking to shape it out I suppose with his hammer, according as his fancy tells him what way it should be worked?

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't he shape it and he having a mind to shape it, and being well used as he is to handle every sort of stone?

Hosty: It is not of stone, statues do be made, but of iron would be rendered into a mould, the

same as sheep's tallow you would be rendering for candles.

Coppinger: I would never say iron to be as natural as stone, or as kind.

Costello: Plaster now would be very tasty and very suitable, and a shelter to be put over it. It would be no way so costly as iron.

Hosty: It is iron is more serviceable, and as to cost, the first expense would be the cheapest, the way it would be a good job, and not to turn against you after.

Costello: What would you say now to cement, and a good stand being under it?

Hosty: If it was a statue was to be made, it's an iron statue it should be.

Coppinger: And what way would you hoist it to its place? It would have the weight in it of the devil's forge.

Hosty: And what do you say to the weight of stone? Look at that slab of your own that has a hole wore through the street, and it but two year or so leaning towards the wall.

Coppinger: It has not a hole made, but to settle itself it did, against such time as it would be called for and be wanting.

Hosty: I to have an estate I would bet it, you would not be able to lift it or to stir it from the place it is standing at this minute.

Coppinger: I'll engage I would, and to throw it over the collar beam of the barn I would, the same as a sack of oats——

(They gather round headstone. Mannion comes in.)

Mannion: Did you make up your mind yet to say out what thing it is ye have settled, for me to bring word to the Board Room in the town?

Hosty: What way can we make our mind up till such time as we have a finish made of this argument?

Coppinger: Did you ever hear it said in any place, Peter Mannion, iron to be more answerable for an image than stone?

Costello: Wouldn't you say now, Peter, there is very lasting wear in cement?

Mannion: It is best for ye make your mind up. There are other old men in the district, and they getting older every minute.

Coppinger. Give me but the time to bring proof to Brian Hosty that there is no weight to signify in a slab of stone. *(Tries to lift it, and Hosty and Costello encourage him, with sarcastic applause.)*

Costello: All the strength you have wouldn't lift that flag.

Hosty: Lift it is it? If you were as strong as Finn MacCumhail you wouldn't lift it.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Dragging Darby away.*) You are a friendly man, Darby Costello, and always very liberal to do as I bid you, not like Brian that is stubborn—Let you settle an image to be made and be put up, and give the contract to Thomas—he is that greedy for work—and it would be a great thing for him rise out of head-stones, and to get a decent job——

Costello: I'd be in dread of Brian Hosty going against me. He is always someway contrary, that you couldn't teach him manners.

Mrs. Coppinger: It would be handsome work for him, and who is nearer than a neighbour? It might put life in him that he would bring me away to America yet. But that to fail us we might as well close the door—You to give your vote for it, and Thomas to give it, that would be two against one.

Mannion: (*Turning from Hosty and Coppinger to Mrs. Coppinger.*) Will you tell me what at all is it they are arguing about?

(*Costello escapes and goes off.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: It is that they cannot agree what is the right material for to put in a statue.

Mannion: And is it a statue so, they have laid down as their choice thing and their plan?

Mrs. Coppinger: Darby Costello will tell you if it is. Where is he? Well, he has but a bad heart of courage. Why would they be making so much talk about it, they not to have made it their plan?

Mannion: I would say it to be a queer thing for them to lay their thoughts to, and a very queer thing—Let me keep now the messages in mind—Candles for the shop—Paraffin oil for the priest—a pair of boots for the clerk—the Board of Guardians to be told there is a statue to be put up with the profit of the oil of the whales—(*Goes off as Coppinger with a great effort upsets the stone, which falls with a crash.*)

Hosty: Do you call it lifting it to throw it down?

Coppinger: Wait a minute now till I'll strive secondly!—

Mrs. Coppinger: Thomas! It's time bring the mash to the cow—run Brian Hosty, there's a sheep of your sheep—unless it might be a stone—is lying on its back near its death—(*Brian jumps over wall.*)

Coppinger: But sure we made no settlement yet,

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Shoving him into the house.*)
It's well for you to have some one to mind you
and to take care of you—Believe me, Thomas
Coppinger, you are going to get your chance!

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene same, but night time. Moonlight. Candle and firelight shining from the open half-door of Coppinger's house. Mrs. Coppinger heard singing within.

Malachi: (Coming down street.) The fall of night is come and I didn't find him yet. East and west I'll go searching for him, east and west—he to be in the hollow I'll be on the hill, he to be on the hill I'll be in the hollow!

Peggy: (Coming from her cabin with milk jug.) What is on you, Malachi Naughton, that you are running there and hither, as if there was one dead belonging to you?

Malachi: (Stops short.) It is long you are in this world, Peggy Mahon, and you knew a power of people from birth to age, and heard many histories. Tell me, now, did ever you know or did ever you hear tell of one Hugh O'Lorrha?

Peggy. What would ail me not to hear of him? Hugh O'Lorrha—Hugh Beg O'Lorrha,

Malachi: That is it, ma'am, you have it—I knew well you should have that knowledge, and with all the generations that passed before you in your time.

Peggy: (*Sits down near Mrs. Coppinger's door.*) I'd tell you out his story if I didn't think it too long to be keeping you on the soles of your feet while you'd be hearing it.

Malachi: Tell it out, tell it out! You to be telling me his story through the length of seven year, I wouldn't be tired listening to it.

Peggy: Ah, it's near gone from me. All such things are gone from me, with the dint of fretting after them that flew away.

Malachi: You cannot but tell it. It is through miracles his name was brought to this place. I tell you it was not brought without wonders.

Peggy: To leave his mother's house he did——

Malachi: So he would too. What would happen to the world the like of him to have stopped at home? He wasn't one would be sitting through the week the same as the police, having his feet in the ashes.

Peggy: Out fighting on the road he went——

Malachi: There were always good fighters in Ireland till this present time. The people have

no fight in them now worth while, so lagging they are grown to be and so liary.

Peggy: Fighting, fighting. To get into some trouble he did—it is hardly he escaped from the Naked Hangman——

Malachi: It is the Sassanach twisted the rope for him so. Terrible wicked they were, and God save us, I believe they are every bit as wicked yet. Go on, ma'am, sound it out. Well, it was the one hand sent the whales steering over the tide, and brought me here to yourself gathering newses.

Peggy: (*Crossly.*) Where is the milk, Mrs. Coppinger has me promised? I'll tell no more. There's too many striving to knock talk out of me, and the red tea stewing on the coals, and I myself weary and waiting for the drop of new milk. Is it coming out you are, Mrs. Coppinger?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*From inside.*) I'll have it now for you within one minute.

Malachi: They will mind me now, they will surely mind me now, when I tell them that name has to be put up. It is to myself the message was brought, Peggy Mahon, to put up the name of Hugh O'Lorrha, and to sound it in the ears of the entire world. Oh, there will be no fear from this out it will ever be disremembered again, or wither away from the mind of any person at all,

Peggy: Have you no one of your own to keep in mind, Malachi Naughton, that you should go battling for a name is no more to you than any other, and not to be content with your own dead?

Malachi: It is more to me than any other name. It is a name I would go walking the world for, without a shoe to my foot! And why would I do that for any common person, would be maybe as ugly as the people I do be seeing every day, and as cross and as crabbed? What call would I have going through hardship for a man would be no better maybe, and no better looking, than myself?

Peggy: What sort of a tribe are you sprung from, or of a poor mountainy race, that you would have no one of your own kindred or of your blood, would be worth remembering?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Who has been listening, coming to door.*) The doctor called death a shadow, and death called the doctor a shadow! Faith the two of ye put me in mind of the both of them, and you disputing and arguing, and neither of you owning a ha'porth worth arguing for, or a perch of land only the street, or so much as a stim of sense.

Malachi: Putting me down the whole of ye do be, and saying I know nothing; and I maybe as apt as the best of ye, and as wide awake. That

one counting her own dead in the one count with Hugh O'Lorrha. A man that robbed the apple from the hundreds! But his name will go up in spite of ye, if God has a hand in it!

Mrs. Coppinger: Leave arguing with him, Peggy, you might as well be talking with the wind. If you go fighting, can't you fight for things that are worth fighting for.

Peggy: Why would any person go set their mind upon the hither side of the grave, and not upon the far side? I have seen them come and seen them go, the scores and the hundreds, the same as if they came on a visit to a neighbour's house, and went from it again the time their clothes would be wore out and tattered. And the skin to be wore into rags, the soul is the one thing always, for it was the breath of God put into Adam, and it is the possession of God ever since. I know well where my own man is living yet, and where I will come to him when the Lord will send for me.

Mrs. Coppinger: It is hard know that. Any man that goes to punishment doesn't come back to tell his story, and in Heaven I suppose they keep a fast hold of them too. This world's the best to keep your eye on. Who knows will we see them again, or will we care much about it if we do see them? It would be best for you have

taken another comrade in your bloom, in place of always lamenting him that is gone, and you without one to close your eyes the time you'll die, or the help of a man in the house, and without a son or a daughter in all Ireland.

Peggy: You never laid an eye on Patrick Mahon, or never lived next or near him, and you saying that. The parting of us two was the parting of the body with the soul. I tell you there never set his foot on the floor of the world, and never told his secret to a woman, so good a man. Where would I find, east or west, the like of him of a comrade? The time he wanted me, and some were again it, we gave one another a hard promise to let no person at all come between us or separate us. And after he going they had a match made for me with some man they were bringing into the house. But I said I never would rear a son to rubbish, and I drove them out. (*She rises.*) And if I was glad to get a dry potato at some times, and a bit of Indian meal itself in the scarce July, I have my promise kept. Why would I take a man, I said, and my comrade sleeping with no woman?

Mrs. Coppinger: That's not the way with me, but I would sooner have some one to care and to nourish, than to be looking after a shadow you would have no way to be serving, but maybe with an odd prayer or a Mass, and that never might be

aware maybe were you thinking about him or remembering him at all.

Peggy: It's likely he knows, though I never saw him since, and never had a sign or a vision from him, and it's often I went out looking for him at the fall of day. Never a sign or a vision, but often and often he came across me in my sleep. Waiting for him I do be till such time as I will come to him, where the Almighty has a very good place of His own. (*Goes towards her own door.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: You might come to him, maybe—but it is hard to be sure of it, and what way can you know?

Peggy: (*Turning.*) What way can I know is it? I can give you God's bail for it.

Mrs. Coppinger: There can be no bail better than that—But to get to our dead itself, it is not likely they would know us or recognise us, and the length of the years does be between us.

Peggy: Don't be saying that! Don't be putting that word out of your mouth! How dare you be putting your own bad thoughts between myself and my decent comrade?

Mrs. Coppinger: I didn't think you would be so much vexed I to say that. Here now is the drop of milk is warm from the cow yet.

Peggy: (*Throwing it out of her jug.*) I will not take it or take anything at all from your hand, and you after striving to rob me of my hope. I tell you, that to be gone from me, my heart would break, that is wore to a silk thread. He not to know me is it? Oh, Patrick! Oh, my grief! and maybe it might be so. For what am I but a bent crooked hag, withering through the world, and you yourself being, as I think, one of the fair-haired boys of Heaven! (*Goes in and shuts door.*)

(*Mrs. Coppinger goes into her house. Coppinger and Costello come in. Coppinger crosses to his own door.*)

Coppinger: Well, now the hurry of the day is over, we can settle our minds to the choice we have to make for laying out the benefit of the whales. (*Sitting down and taking hat off.*)

Costello: (*Sitting down.*) We'll get more fair play making a plan, and Brian Hosty not being in it, to be running down and ridiculing every word at all we will say.

Coppinger: Ah, that is but a way he has, and a habit of his habits, to be running down every Munster person, and to be drawing his own province upon us. He to be cross, it is that the generations were cross before him.

Costello: I don't know are we any way fitted to be taking such a load upon our shoulders at all.

Coppinger: Why wouldn't we be fitted? A man that has the gift, will get more out of his own brain than another man will by learning, and there's many a man without learning will get the better of a college bred man, and will have better luck too. It's a great plan we will be making and a great story and a great sound through the whole ring of Ireland.

(Hosty comes in, gloomily.)

Costello: We were just waiting for you, Brian Hosty, till we'd start talking in earnest about the spending of the profit of the whales.

(Mrs. Coppinger comes and stands at window, listening.)

Hosty: It's a great deal of talk you are wishful to be making. I tell you, ye have done enough of talking.

Costello: Ah, don't be so cross now! A person to be cross it would scare me.

Hosty: It is the chat of the both of ye, and your talking, has caused the appearance of fools to be put upon us and upon the whole of the headland, with the plan ye made up, and that ye sent unknownst to myself to the Board Room.

Coppinger: Sure we made no choice at all yet and no plan. We didn't begin hardly to argue the matter yet.

Hosty: Who was it sent word to the Board of Guardians so, that the three best men of the point of Druim-na-cuan had their mind made up—for the benefit of the whole parish and its gain—to lay out the riches cast up by the sea into their hand, on no other thing than a—statue!

Costello and Coppinger: (*Standing up.*) A statue!

Coppinger: Sure we had no intention at all of putting up a statue. Only conversing about such articles we were.

Costello: (*Seeing Mrs. Coppinger make a sign to him.*) It is likely Peter Mannion took in earnest the little argument we were going on with, and that Brian Hosty himself was the first to start.

Coppinger: So he was, with his mention of the Statue of Liberty that is up above the harbour of New York.

Hosty: Let Peter Mannion, that is coming up the street, be put upon his oath, till he'll say out who was it was seeking a job for himself, making mention of an image that would be cut out of stone.

Coppinger: I was not seeking a job! I said, supposing there to be a statue wanted, stone would answer it best. I only said, "supposing."

Costello: Sure it is only supposing the whole of us were. We were not meaning anything at all.

Mannion: (*Coming in.*) I am after coming back from the Board Room. The plan you have made for the benefit of the headland was put before the Guardians. To give consent to it they were asked, and a grant if the means would run short.

Coppinger: And is it a fact now, it was said before the Board that the plan we had laid out was for a statue?

Mannion: Why wouldn't it, when that was what the three of ye had agreed?

Hosty: The three of us! Glory be to God! And all the world knowing we are three men that never could agree!

Costello: My dearest life! And what now did the Guardians say hearing that?

Mannion: They said it was a very nice thought, no better, and a very good thing to do.

Hosty: They said that, is it?

Costello: The Lord protect and save us!

Mannion: Themselves or the Rural Council—I'm not rightly sure between them—will send a commission on next Friday, that is a holy-day, to take a view of the site, and to lay the foundation stone. Speeches there will be, they bringing a

member of Parliament purposely, and a meeting with banners and with bands.

Coppinger: And no one in the place fit to put up the monument but myself! Wouldn't that be enough of a story to put upon the headstone of any man at all? Didn't I know well it was a miracle brought the whales, the way I would get my chance!

Mannion: The Guardians are wishful to know the name is to be put upon the statue.

Coppinger: The name is it?

Mannion: The name to be sure of the patriot it will be made in the similitude of, and the shape.

Hosty: The patriot!

Costello: It's a statue of Liberty Brian Hosty was talking about in the commencement.

Mannion: Ah, who the hell cares about liberty? It is what the Board made sure you had the name chosen of some good man. Word I have to send them by the post-car will be passing at break of day. (*Goes off up street.*)

Hosty: And in what place in the wide world are we to go looking for the name of a good man?

Malachi: (*Rises and comes to them.*) Is it what ye are going to do, to put up the name of some big man?

Costello: It is, and his image along with it.

Malachi: You need not go far looking for that. It is I myself am able to give you a name is worth while. As if blown away on the wind it was, till it was brought back this day, with messengers were not common messengers, but strange. You may believe me telling you he is the fittest man.

Coppinger: Who might he be so, and where is he presently?

Malachi: He not to be out of the world what would he want with miracles? He to be in it at this time wouldn't he be well able to cut a way for himself and ask no help from anyone at all.

Coppinger: Tell us out who was he so?

Malachi: A man he was that left his mother's house where he was reared, and went out fighting on the roads of the world.

Coppinger: There is many a one did that in the last seven hundred years. It was maybe following after Sarsfield he went, and the Limerick Treaty broken?

Malachi: It was out against the English he went——

Hosty: A '98 man maybe?

Malachi: It is hardly he escaped from the Naked Hangman——

Costello: No, but a '48 man. There was few that escaped in '98.

Coppinger: It's often their story wasn't put down right by the illiterate people in the old time. Tell out his name now till we'll see what do we know about it.

Malachi: A great name, a great name will go sounding through the world. It is I myself got the charge to bring it to mind. Though my clothes are poor my story is high! Did ever any of ye hear till to-day the name of Hugh O'Lorrha?

Hosty: I never did. I think it is but foolish talk he is giving out, that we are fools ourselves listening to.

Costello: I never heard it I think—or maybe I did hear it.

Coppinger: It is not to a mountainy man it would be left to make that name known, and it being the name of any big man. And I myself never hearing it at all. (*Goes and sits at his own door.*)

Hosty: It is down from the mountains the whole country is destroyed, so wild and so unruly as ye do be, and so ready to give an opinion on everything in the world wide. (*He sits down at Peggy's door.*)

Costello: (*To Hosty.*) Light in the head he does be, every time there is a twist in the moon. It's best for him go back to the hillside.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*At door.*) Innocent he always was, and where there is innocence there is ignorance. To speak to him at all would bother you, as much as it would bother himself.

Hosty: Laying down to us he is, to put our statue up to one Hugh O'Lorrha.

Mrs. Coppinger: Ah sure, he has my arm blackened with the dint of the pinches he gave me a while ago, striving to drive that story into my head, and he cherishing a bit of a board, and it squz up to his chest.

Coppinger: Tell me this, Mary, you that have that much songs a horse wouldn't carry the load of them, did you meet in ere a verse of them with the name of Hugh O'Lorrha?

Malachi: She did not to be sure. His name to be in a song, what would he want with stones or with monuments? Wouldn't any man at all be well satisfied, his name to be going through the generations in a song. My grief that I haven't the wit to make a poem for him or a ballad, and it is a great pity I am not prone to versify!

Hosty: Ah, that one would keep you talking till the clear light of day! Go leave us now, where we have business to be thinking of.

Malachi: (*Going to corner.*) It is laid down for him his name to be put up. It is *for* him I say. (*Sits upon a stone.*)

Hosty: Come now and make our settlement with no more delay. There being a statue to be put up in this place, and the whole fleet of guardians and councillors and members of Parliament wanting to get knowledge of the name we will put on it, who now is the most man to be respected, and to be done honour to, of all that ever came out of Ireland? What is your opinion now, Darby Costello, if you have any opinion at all?

Costello: Don't be laying it on me now. I'm in dread I wouldn't find a name would be pleasant to every person, and that would give no offence in any place. Let you ask Mrs. Coppinger, that it is given in to to be the best singer in this place, and that has the praise of every man ever got praises in her songs.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's easy say who is the best man.

Costello: (*With a sigh.*) It is not easy, but hard.

Mrs. Coppinger (*sings*)—

“His life and liberty he risked both here and everywhere,

Both slander and prison he suffered his own share,

I'm sure he loved all Ireland, 'tis admitted near and far

He would have gained a fortune just at the Irish Bar!”

Costello: Good woman!

Hosty: Rise it, ma'am, rise it!

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Coming a step forward*)—

“The foes of Ireland, well 'tis known he often
made them quail,
With eloquence like thunder he defended Gran-
uaile,
You may talk of Wellington and the battles
that he won,
But in all that he deserved was nothing to what
O'Connell done!”

Costello: Very good! That's the chat now!
“But in all he deserved was nothing to what
O'Connell done!”

Coppinger: He had a gift of sweetness on the
tongue. Whatever cause he took in hand it was
as good as gained.

Hosty: The best man within the walls of the
world he was. He never led anyone astray.

Mrs. Coppinger: What wonder in that, he
being as he was the gift of God. Wasn't Ennis
the best town in the thirty-two counties of Ireland,
sending him to Parliament the time his own place
had him put out?

Costello: (*Sings.*) “In the year '47 we laid
him in Glasnevin.”—I'm no songster like Mrs.
Coppinger.

Mrs. Coppinger: To throw out the poison from his cup he did, the time there was death lurking in it. The English that put it within in it, because he was a pious man. I seen his picture in a book one time. I give you my word I kissed it there and then.

Coppinger: His picture! No, but I that saw himself one time in Galway. I couldn't get anear him, all the nations of the world were gathered there to see him.

Costello: Sure I seen him myself, it was the greatest thing ever I saw. He drove through the streets very plain, and an oiled cap on him, and he having but the one horse.

Hosty: No, but seven horses in his coach he had the day I saw him. They couldn't get in the eighth.

Coppinger: Oh, it's a great image and a great monument I will shape out for him the dear man——

Costello: So you will! And he having one hand resting on a post, and a paper having Repeal on it held up to his chest.

Mrs. Coppinger: No, but Emancipation that should be on the paper. There is no other man that could be put beside him at all.

Costello: That is settled now and well settled. That is a great satisfaction, there to be no quarrel-

ling or no argument. It is a very nice thing, Brian Hosty, you to be no way thorny or disagreeable, but content and satisfied to be putting up a monument to a Munster man.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what objection could he urge against a Munster man, and he being worthier and more honourable than any man of the other provinces of Ireland?

Hosty: I am not giving in to that.

Costello: You are giving in to it, as is right for you to do. Every person seeing the image put up will know that you were of the one mind and the one opinion with ourselves, and you giving your voice for our man.

Hosty: I to be as wise then as I am now, I would not have given in to you, or given you occasion to be running down my province, and giving the branch to your own.

Mrs. Coppinger. And where would you find now any sort of a hero in Connacht would give satisfaction far and near, and have his name up as good as the men of Munster? Dan O'Connell, Smith O'Brien, Brian Boru, O'Sullivan Bere——

Hosty: Ah, we heard enough of that old string of heroes in the time that is past. They are all done away with now, and what is left of the best of them but a little fistful of bones? It's the champions of Connacht are battling yet. Let

the statue be put up to some living man and where is Munster?

Costello: What way would you put up a monument to a living man, and some traitors maybe turning against him in the latter end, and running him down?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Coming over to Coppinger.*) Do not put your hand, Thomas, to a likeness of any living man at all, and his neighbours to be coming and criticising it, saying it would not resemble his features or his face.

Hosty: Dead or living I've no mind to give my voice for any man was bred in Munster. You're a proud piece, Mrs. Coppinger, and you think you have got the better of me, but if O'Connell himself did his work fair enough, there were *some* in your province didn't turn out too well the time Cromwell was on the road, and to the day of my death I will never put praises on one of their district.

(*Coppinger jumps up angrily.*)

Costello: (*Stopping him.*) Wait now till we'll think of some person would answer the two of ye— There is one was not from the west or from the south, that was Parnell. There are some say he was the best man ever lived.

Coppinger: He was not, but O'Connell was the best, that wore his hat in the House of Commons what no man but the King can do.

Hosty: If Parnell didn't wear his hat in it, he fought a good fight in it.

Coppinger: If it wasn't for O'Connell there would be no members in the English Parliament at all would be Catholics!

Hosty: If there wouldn't, there'd be no Catholic judges on the Bench, calling out for coercion and to do away with juries!

Costello: It's best for ye agree to Parnell. I'm told if he had held out and kept up, he would have got the second best match in England.

Hosty: He did more than any other man I tell you, and he to have lived till now Ireland would be different to what it is.

Mrs. Coppinger: Let you not agree to him, Coppinger. Sure I had his picture on the wall and I took it down after, the priest thinking it did not look well to be hanging where it was.

Costello: Ah, they have but the one thing against him, and how do we know but that was a thing appointed by God?

Malachi: (*Suddenly coming between them.*) Look now at the fighting and quarrelling and the slander-ing is sent among ye, the way ye will be made give in to my own choice man. If you didn't give in to him at the first, you'll be druv to give in to him secondly! A shining image of silver I will see put

up, and the words will be on it worked with red gold.

Hosty: The devil bother you, Malachi, a poor foolish creature the like of you, to be interrupting our talk.

Coppinger: Let you go in from under that moon that does be making your mind take a flight, till the worst thing you'll be saying you'll think it to be the best.

Malachi: Let you not be belittling me! I tell you I wouldn't give the weight of that little board in my hand, for all that's on the headland of Druim-na-cuan!

Coppinger: Pup, pup, Malachi, we have manners and were brought up to manners, and you have none.

Malachi: I tell you there's three quarters of the world is not good enough to be drowned!

Coppinger: No, but there are some have a tongue as bad as Judas had a heart, and that is bad enough.

Malachi: Keep your own tongue off me so! It is what you are a bully, and the captain of all the bullies!

Mrs. Coppinger: What is ailing you? Be mannerly in your anger anyway. Yourself and your Hugh O'Lorrha, that was maybe some sort

of an idolator or a foreigner, that went breaking all the commandments!

Malachi: Whatever he was I'd go to the north side of hell for seven year for him! The whole fleet of ye together are not worth the smallest rib of his hair!

Hosty: In my opinion he was an innocent or a fool the same as yourself, or you would not be infatuated with him the way you are!

(All laugh.)

Malachi: That will be a dear laugh to you! Is it defaming the character ye are of my darling man? But I'll put terror on ye! I'll give you a clout will knock your head as solid as any stone in the wall! *(Flourishes board.)*

Coppinger: Lay down that stick, you miserable imp!

Malachi: I'll strike a blow with it will split bits off a rock. You big turkey gobbler you! Come on till I'll make a great scatter of you! *(They close round him seizing board.)* Death and destruction, but I'm as strong as you! *(He falls in the scuffle.)*

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it to kill him you did?

Coppinger: Not a kill in the world, but the senses that is knocked out of him.

Hosty: If it wasn't that there is luck with a fool, he'd be done for.

Mannion: (*Coming in.*) Let ye stand back now. What call had you to go charging at him, and bearing him to the ground?

Costello: No, but himself that came rushing into handigrips with us, the same as horned cattle in a field.

Mrs. Coppinger: It is bleeding in the head he is, with the sharpness of the stone he fell on; there is not much happened him beyond that.

Coppinger: It's best lay him in the hooker below is just making a start for Ballyvaughan. To leave him in the infirmary ere morning they can, till such time as he will come around. Try now can you rise up, Malachi.

(*He is helped up, and Mannion and Mrs. Coppinger lead him towards pier.*)

Malachi: (*Calling out as he goes.*) Time is a good story-teller! Ye will do the business for me yet, till his name will be sung through the seven kingdoms! What is allotted cannot be blotted. It is for him I say—it is for him. (*He is led off.*)

Costello: It is a pity he to have made that disturbance, and we being so pleasant and so peaceable together.

Coppinger: We have time enough yet to make another choice. We didn't go through the saints of Ireland yet, or the seventeen kings of Burren.

Hosty: Where's the use of calling it a choice, and I having two contrary men against me. Any time I will strive to get the goal for my own man, the two of ye will join to put me down.

(Mrs. Coppinger and Mannion come back.)

Costello: It is a pity neighbours to be going contrary to one another. "Let ye be at one," Biddy Early said, "and ye will rule the world." It would be right to bring the whole case to a closure, and not to be hitting and striking and calling "Hi" for one, or "Hi" for another, the same as if it was a disputed election was in it.

Mrs. Coppinger: I saw a very wicked election in Ennis one time, and I rising. That was before there came in the voting by ballot.

Costello. You are a great woman for thoughts, Mrs. Coppinger, and that is a thought will settle all. What would ail us not to give our votes by ballot? There would be no room then for disputing, the choice being over and made, fair and quiet, and without favour or intimidation.

Coppinger: And where will you get ballot boxes and voting papers, and a courthouse, and two men sitting in it with themselves, and the

voters writing—if they can write—and shouting out if they cannot, the name of their own man?

Costello: What signifies clerks and papers? What do you say now to Peter Mannion? It is what we'll do, to come up to him and tell him secretly the name we have our mind made up to; and he to tell out after who has the benefit of the votes.

Mannion: (*Coming forward.*) Let ye all fall back so, and not to be putting ears on yourselves, but to draw anear me one by one.

Coppinger: That's it, and you yourself to be standing stark and quiet, the same as the image will be standing there in the time to come, and we to go west as far as the rick of turf——

Mannion: (*Standing stiffly.*) Whatever champion of the champions of Ireland ye think to be the most worthy and the most fitting to have his name put up, let ye tell it out here to me privately. And that being done, I will make my count, and tell out after who is it has gained the day.

Coppinger: That's business now. And which now of the three of us is to be the first to give his own vote?

Mrs. Coppinger: It is Peter Mannion is well able to settle that, and he being used to society, and the meetings at the union.

Mannion: Let ye come so according to the letters of your name—A, B, C, C, Coppinger—or Costello—C o Coppinger C o Costello, it isn't easy say which of the two of ye has to go first.

Costello: Let it be Thomas so. I'd be someway shy and delicate to be called in at the start. Thomas the first, and I myself will follow after.

(They all go out of sight. Mrs. Coppinger goes into house.)

Mannion: Come on, so, Thomas Coppinger, and give out your vote, according to your opinion and your conscience and your choice.

Coppinger: *(Coming in and speaking to Mannion confidentially with hand to mouth.)* It is what I am thinking, Peter Mannion, there is truth in what herself was saying a while ago. It is a hard thing to be asked to go make a likeness of a man, and his appearance to be known before. And the people to be criticising, now they have got to be so crafty and so enlightened. But a man not to have his appearance known, you would have leave to put on him any shape that might be pleasing to yourself, or that would come handy, according as the stone would be slippery or be kind. Now every person knows, by pictures, or by seeing them, or by history from one to another, the features of Parnell and of Daniel O'Connell——

Mannion: Hurry on now. It is not sitting hearing a sermon in the chapel I am, and in dread of the Missioners to go slip out from the door.

Coppinger: Did ever you hear now any person to have seen a picture or a likeness of Malachi Naughton's man?

Mannion: I cannot bring to mind that ever I did.

Coppinger: I give my voice and my vote so for Hugh O'Lorrha. (*Goes into his house.*)

Mannion: Come on now and draw near to me, Darby Costello.

Costello: (*Coming close to Mannion.*) It is often I was saying, Peter Mannion, unfriendliness among neighbours to be a very awkward thing. I never would be asking to rise a dispute, or to bring any person into one at all.

Mannion: Is it through the dark hours of the night you are wishful to keep me perishing in the air that is of the nature of frost and of sleet?

Costello: (*Seizing his arm.*) It's easy seen you are not living in this village, Peter Mannion, or within three fields of it. If I say Dan O'Connell, Brian Hosty will be making attacks on me, and if I say Parnell, Mrs. Coppinger will be picking at me and going on at me, and maybe putting up Thomas to be mis-spelling my name, and he print-

ing it on the head-piece he has me promised at the last——

Mannion: (Shaking him off.) I give you my word I'll leave you here and now, to be giving out your reasoning to the seals and to the gulls of the air.

Costello: (Holding him.) It is impossible to say what men would be best, and good and bad being together in the whole of them. And all I would wish is the name of some man that never gave offence, and had ne'er an enemy worth while—and it's likely that would be the mountainy man's choice, Hugh O'Lorrha.

(He goes off.)

Mannion: Come on now, Brian Hosty, and let me go out of this.

Hosty: (Coming in.) There are some on this headland want to get the master hand—*(Points towards Coppinger's door.)* Himself and his fire-ball!

Mannion: Hurry on now.

Hosty: To give them too much of a scope, and not to give them a check, it would be impossible to live anear them. It would be worse they to be in power than Martin Luther.

Mannion: Don't be delaying, but see can you agree with the two that are agreed at this time.

Hosty: They to have agreed, it is some plan they have made to get the mastery over myself and over Connacht. I never told a lie but two or three, and you may believe me saying, that if there were two hundred Dan O'Connells, and twenty thousand Mr. Parnells, and a sovereign in their hands for every vote I'd vote, I'd give it to none of them, but to a man I'm sure and certain sure Darby or Thomas, or his wife, never gave out a challenge for, and never blew the horn for, and that is the fool's man, Hugh O'Lorrha!

Mannion: (Beckoning the others in.) Let ye draw near to me now. Come up here Mrs. Coppinger, till I'll count out the returns. By the opinion, and the judgment, of the three fairest men, and the three choice men of Druim-na-cuan, and they voting together the same as children of one house, without deceit or trickery, the image is to be reared on this headland is to stand for the honour and the memory and for the great name and the fame of Hugh O'Lorrha!

All. Hugh O'Lorrha!

(They raise their hands in astonishment, and look at one another.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

Scene: same as before. Four days later, mid-day.

Mrs. Coppinger putting out chairs and a table and sweeping. Costello looking on.

Costello: It is certain this will be a great meeting of people, and a grand white day for the headland of Druim-na-cuan. I would want a slate and a pencil to count all I saw coming the road.

Mrs. Coppinger: Isn't it a big hurry is on them, to ask to come laying the stone for the monument, and it never mentioned or thought of at all up to four days ago.

Costello: Sure at that time the whales had the last puff hardly gone out of them.

Mrs. Coppinger: What way are the whales presently? I thought to go see them but it failed me, and the neighbours from all parts drawing in for talk every whole minute.

Costello: It was the one way with myself, I didn't get the time to draw anear them. It is what Thomas was saying, next Monday maybe, with the help of God, we'll go start drawing off the oil.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Dusting a chair.*) That now is all the chairs they can get. Sure they could not all expect to be seated, and they coming in their hundreds. There is not a west of Ireland man will not be in it.

Costello: Indeed, ma'am, you have accommodated them very well with everything. It's well for them get a place to stand itself. From all I hear, and they congregated, it would fail you to put a pin between any two and two or any twelve and a dozen. Pressing to hear the speeches they will be. They are saying the Chairman of the Board to be a very solid speaker.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's the member for North Munster is the best. Grand out and out he is, and has very tasteful drawn out talk. The reporters themselves couldn't follow it or put the half of it down.

Costello: (*Looking out over wall.*) Tents and booths they are setting up upon the strand. Glory be to God, it's like a theatre to be looking at them arriving. They were waiting for the turn of the spring-tide. You were craving spree this long time, Mrs. Coppinger, and it is with pride you are apt to be spending this day.

(*Malachi comes in from left, his head tied up, and his arm.*)

Mrs. Coppinger: And who now would be the first to come to the meeting but Malachi Naughton! And indeed it is much like a ghost he is looking, that would knock a start out of you, or a shadow would be wandering through the world.

Malachi: (*Looking about on the ground.*) It is there I left it down. I'm certain it is in that spot I left it out of my hand.

Mrs. Coppinger: What way did they do a cure on you in the Workhouse, Malachi? Bet up I was fearing you were, and that it's hardly you would be eating this world's bread again.

Malachi: Just battled it out I did—just battled it out— Did ye see in any place my bit of a board I used to have?

Mrs. Coppinger. I did not see it, unless it might be thrust as kindling in under the turf on the hearth.

Malachi: Isn't that a hard case now, my bit of a board to be robbed from me, and it after being brought to me over the ocean and all the dangers of the sea, and having on it the name you know. That to be swept away from me, I am penetrated and tossed.

Mrs. Coppinger: You to burn the house down it's not likely you would find it. But you may quit fretting and breaking your heart, for if it is the name of Hugh O'Lorrha you are craving

to see, you will see it in a short while printed in clean letters beneath the soles of his feet, and his own image reared up in this spot all the same as life, in the shape will be put upon him by my own man, according to the pictures and the plan are to come to us from Dublin on this day.

Malachi: I heard that, I heard that. I knew well his name would be put up in spite of ye. But it's for the whole world that will be, and they coming from the east and from the west to do honour to him; and he might take it bad of me, I to go lose that little bit of a board.

Mrs. Coppinger: You heard of all was doing so far away as the Workhouse Infirmary? Isn't it a great wonder now tidings to go out so speedy and so swift.

Malachi: It was in every person's mouth ere last night, in the ward where I was screeching with the pain, and the doctors after taking the full of a bucket of badness out of my bones. As much blood nearly came away from me as would be in three men. But I rose up after hearing that news.

Mrs. Coppinger: I wonder they to have let you out and the way you are, that you couldn't hardly put a rack through your hair.

Malachi: (*Sits on chair beside the table.*) I asked no leave. I slipped out in the half dark at

the battling of the day with the night. The road to be seventeen times as long, I wouldn't feel it. I tell you I was that strong I could walk on water, my heart being light and airy the way it is with the thought of his name being put up and his image, that will be shining out as bright as stars on a frosty night, and all the whole country pressing to look at it.

Mrs. Coppinger: It isn't likely it is shining it will be, it would take marble would be rubbed for to shine, and the hardness of that would not serve Thomas's tools. And the colour of it wouldn't answer either, the spotted or the black. It is likely he was a man having a white front to his shirt—I wonder now is it swarthy he was or red-haired?

Malachi: It is I myself could give you knowledge of that.

Mrs. Coppinger: What way could you have knowledge, and he being dead?

Malachi: God be with the company that left me in the night time!

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it to see one belonging to him, or that had acquaintance with him you did?

Malachi: I'd burst if I didn't tell it! A cross-cut I was making that was eight strong miles across the mountain, and I was travelling down

a little avenue of stones by the forth that was all shining with the brightness of the night—More people I saw in it than ever I saw at a hurling, and I'd ask no better sight than that in high Heaven.

Mrs. Coppinger: Where now did all that company come from?

Malachi: More people than ever I saw in twenty fairs. And beyond that I saw twelve of the finest horses ever I saw, and riders on them racing around the forth. Many a race I saw since I lived in this world, but for tipping, and tugging, and welting the horses, never a race like that—and there was a rider of those riders without a twist in him—at the first there was like a fog about him——

Mrs. Coppinger: Ah, it is but visions of the night you are talking about; or your sight that spread on you. It was but the shadow of some soul you saw, or people that are out of this world. Or maybe it is dreaming you were, and you stepping out through your sleep.

Malachi: (*Getting up.*) Take care but it was no dream! Let you go out looking yourself so in the night time. And if you do go, it is likely you will see nothing but the flaggy rocks and the clefts, for it's not all are born to see things of the kind. I'll tell you no more, I wish I had told

you nothing, and I wish I didn't lose my little bit of a board! (*Goes into Coppinger's house looking for it on the ground.*)

Coppinger: (*Coming in.*) Well, I have brought you tidings you will wonder at, and that will raise and comfort your heart!

Mrs. Coppinger: There is nothing would make me wonder after all happened in these days past. I to rise up in the morning under lofty rafters in Boston, I give you my word I'd take it as simple as a chicken would be hatched out of the shell!

Coppinger: (*Sits on table.*) Did ever you hear the name of a Hosty or a Costello or my own name, that is as good as their own through the father, besides any flight it might take with the mother, to be put up on the papers with praises around and about them.

Mrs. Coppinger: Why would they be put up on the papers with praises? I never heard of Brian or Darby no more than yourself, ever to have been brought before the magistrates, or to have put his head inside a gaol?

Costello: Who was telling you?

Coppinger: The Dispensary Doctor that stopped his side-car on the road, and the driver of the mail car, and *he* would tell no lie, and Morrissey is herding for Cunningham, and that

was bringing back a score of lambs from the market at Cloon.

Mrs. Coppinger: And what account were they giving of what was on the papers?

Coppinger: Three honourable men, the papers said we were, that showed respect where respect should be showed. A pattern and an example for all Ireland they said we were, the nut of the bunch, the flower of Druim-na-cuan and the clean wheat of the Gael!

Costello: Do you tell me so?

Coppinger: And more than that again, the Board of Guardians gave out a great lacerating to all the rest of the Unions of the two provinces, where they had never stretched a hand to raise up the memory, or so much as to change the address on a street, to the great high up name of Hugh O'Lorrha!

Mrs. Coppinger: That is very good. Believe me, there is not a Board or a Board Room west of the Shannon, but will have a comrade cry sent out between this and the Feast of Pentecost.

Coppinger: I ask you, Mary, and I ask the two of you, did you often hear me saying I would surely get my chance?

Costello: I wonder now you to have courage to go think yourself fitted to make a figure of a champion all the world will be coming to see.

Coppinger: I'm no way daunted or turning my back upon the work! I tell you if it was three statues was wanted, of the three sons of Usnach, or the three Manchester martyrs, or the three saints of Burren, MacDuagh, MacDara and Columcille, it's ready I'd be and greedy I'd be to set my hand to the work!

Hosty: (Coming in with rolls of paper, going to seat outside Peggy's door.) I got the pictures from the Clerk of the Union where he sent for them to Dublin. Two able lads that drew them he was telling me, that have laid their mind to sketching as their trade.

Coppinger: They should be very apt and very handy, making so little delay in putting down a thing of the kind.

Mrs. Coppinger: (Opening one roll.) Wait now till we'll take a view of them before the meeting will gather about them. *(Unrolls it and shows conventional design for statue of an orator.)*

Costello: That is very nice now and very good.

Coppinger: (Feebly.) It wouldn't be an easy job now, any person to come around the like of

that. Wait till we'll see the comrade, is it any way more simple and more plain.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Opens it.*) It is mostly the same as the other, but for having on it a cloak in place of a coat.

Coppinger: It's a queer thing, now, not to get a picture laid down by some skilled person would be used to going through stone, and not to be leaving it to the fancies of young pups of boys rising up.

Hosty: It would be hard to beat it. Grand out and out it is. But sure the both of them are great. They were very smart surely to make a picture of the sort, without a button left out or a ha'porth. But it's you yourself, I am thinking, that is in dread it will fail you to carry through the job.

Coppinger: I give you my word the one of them would be as light to me as what the other would be. I am asking no reprieve from the work. But the ancient monuments that were the best, such as you'd see in the Abbey beyond, where the hero didn't ask to be put upon his two feet, but was content to lie stretched the way you might be lying on a bed, and you not seeking sleep.

Hosty: Shove over that box, Darby, and hold up the one of them—(*Costello hangs one back and*

front from his neck and gets up on box.) That now is the way it will be—And it is not yourself, Thomas, will have the choice to make this time. It is the Board itself will keep that in their hands.

Costello: (Standing on box.) That is best, it would be a great load on us to have to do that part of the job. It is easy for themselves, that are used to be judging between contracts and tenders and the like.

Hosty: It's not so easy as you think.

Costello: I tell you they have good practice in their business, settling and pitching as they must between the choice and the cull.

Hosty: One of the lads is nephew to the member for North Munster.

Costello: Let them give him the proffer so.

Hosty: By the two mothers, the second of the lads is first cousin to the Vice-Chairman of the Board.

Costello: Let them choose the two of them so, and put them back to back—It might be settled into some sort of a groove that it could be shoved from side to side—(*Turns slowly round on box.*) It to revolve, there would be no aspersion.

Mannion: (Coming in.) I was bid see is all ready for the big men are on the road, with their side-cars and with their band.

Mrs. Coppinger: Let them come now and welcome. We have all ready before them. The table, the chairs, the stone is to be made a hole for, and the pictures.

Mannion: It is what I was bid to ask, is the writing made out, is to be put at the butt of the statue?

Coppinger: The writing is it?

Mannion: That's it. The name and the date of Hugh O'Lorrha's birth, and the place he was reared, and the length of his years, and the deeds he has done. Write me out a docket now having that put down upon it clear and plain.

Hosty: Let Thomas Coppinger do that.

Mrs. Coppinger: Why wouldn't he do it, and you yourself being illiterate and not able to put down your mind on paper?

Hosty: I am not illiterate, but as well aware of things as yourself. But he that is used to be putting such things over the bones of the whole of the district, the pen should be light in his hand as is natural, and should be kind.

Coppinger: Not at all, but every man that comes to be buried that gives me the years and the names. I have enough to do after, bringing them within their scope on the slab. It isn't easy keep them from running around the edges. Let Brian Hosty put it down himself.

Hosty: It never was my trade to be spilling out words on paper, the same as a poet or a clerk. It is Darby Costello has practice, where he was forced by the police to print his name and dwelling-place on the shaft of his ass-car, ere last year.

Costello: Ah, let me alone, I'm in dread I might not do it in a way would satisfy all that are coming.

Coppinger: Ah, what are you wanting to put down? His christened name we have, and the name of his family and his tribe, and that is more than was wrote down of some of the world's great men, such as Homer that spoke Greek and never wrote a lie.

Mannion: It is likely that will not be enough. Reporters that were asking in the town, what place was Hugh O'Lorrha born.

Coppinger: You should know that, Brian Hosty, where your memory has no burdens on it like my own.

Hosty: I forget it as good as yourself.

Mannion: Well, who is it has the whole account? Sure it must have been written down at some time, in a history or in a testament.

Costello: Who would have it but Malachi Naughton? He'll remember us of it.

Hosty: Come out here, Malachi, you're wanting.

Malachi: (Coming out of house.) What is it you are wanting of me?

Coppinger: Give out now, Malachi, if you can give it, the deeds and the greatness of the man is to be set up on a stone in this spot.

Mannion: Ah, it is likely it is little he knows or can tell about him at all.

Malachi: Why wouldn't I know about him, and I after seeing him with my two eyes?

Coppinger: Is it to see him you are saying you did?

Malachi: Clear and plain I saw him in the night time. If I didn't why would my heart leap up with him the way it does?

Coppinger: Is it with yourself you were, seeing him?

Malachi: I have no witnesses but the great God and myself. Crowds and crowds of people I saw. Men like jockeys that were racing—and one that was the leader of them, on a bayish horse—the sun and the moon never shone upon his like—eyes he had were more shining than our eyes, and as to comeliness, there was no more to be found. The champions of Greece, and to put all of them together, would not equal the flower of one drop of his strong blood.

Coppinger: I'm thinking it is little satisfaction we will get questioning him, and his thoughts going as they do upon every queer track. Old he is, and it is all in his brain the things he does be talking of.

Malachi: You have me tormented with your catechism, and you brought away my little bit of a board. Let you go ask Peggy Mahon, that knows all he went through better again than myself.

Coppinger: Peggy Mahon to know him it is likely he was born in this district. She maybe got knowledge he would be some great man, picking it out of the stars.

Mrs. Coppinger: No, but go, Peter Mannion and ask a loan of the Register that has all the names of the parish set down for maybe four score years or a hundred years back.

Mannion: I won't be long getting it, supposing the clerk to be at hand. It isn't easy find him within. The dates not to be away and astray, it would be very handy to get some information from penmanship, besides dragging it as if from the depths and the bottom of a bog. (*Goes.*)

Malachi: You would stand to look at him in a fair I say. Fair hair on him the colour of amber. Twelve handsome riders and he before them all——

Costello: Sure we have the likeness of him here that was made to represent him the way he was thought to be, or that other great men of his sort would be in the habit of appearing. (*Holds up picture.*)

Malachi: (*Coming up eagerly close to picture, staring and falling back.*) The devil's welcome to you! Is it you is calling yourself Hugh O'Lorrha? My bitter curse upon you, how well you stole his name! (*He backs away from it.*)

Costello: If you had intellect to understand things of the sort you would not be running it down. It is away in Dublin that was made, and *they* should know.

Malachi: I'll shave you without soap or razor! It's a skelp of a stone I would be well pleased to be giving you, and you laying claim to his name! That God may perish you! Is it for the like of you the sea was filled with wonders and with signs?

Coppinger: Indeed it is not much the way it is put down on paper, but cutting will be a great addition to it, the time it will be shaped in stone.

Malachi: A man that had seven colours in his eyes! That was for beauty and for strength beyond a hundred! His name in lines of golden letters written on his own blue sword! A man could whip the world and that broke every gap!—

Sure you have no action in you, no action at all, without liveliness, without a nod. The devil himself wouldn't take you or the like of you!

Costello: Well now, Malachi, haven't you the terrible scissors of a tongue! He is well-looking enough if it wasn't he has some sort of a comical dress.

Malachi: (*Threatening picture, but held back by Mrs. Coppinger.*) Be off out of that you unnatural creature, or it is I will twist your mouth round to your poll! I'll blacken the teeth of you and whiten the eyes of you! It is your brain I will be putting out through the windows of your head! If I had but a rod in my hand it's soon I would make you limber! It is powder I will make of your bones and will turn them to fine ashes! It is myself is well able to tear you to flitters and to part your limbs asunder! Be going now before I'll break you in thirty halves. (*Tries to rush at it, but stumbles over box.*) To be putting such an appearance and such an insult on my darling man! The devil skelp the whole of ye! My bitter curse upon the spot ye had planned out for to be putting up a thing the very spit of yourselves, and ugly out of measure! (*Kicks over box.*)

Hosty (*picking up board, which has been hidden under it.*) That is a bit of the Kerry men's green bordered boat, that was lost as was right, and they robbing our mackerel.

Mrs. Coppinger: I said that I heard the name of Hugh O'Lorrha in some place. It is what they were telling me, that was the name on the boat.

Malachi: (*Snatching it.*) Oh, my board, my little bit of a board! How well it failed them to hide from me what the waves of the sea could not keep from me!

Costello: No wonder you to be comforting yourself, Malachi, the way you won't be fearing at any time your brave hero to be but a deceit and a mockery. Sure he must be some big man his name to be printed on a board.

Malachi: A deceit is it? I to think that, why would I be wearing his livery? It is what I am thinking, Darby Costello, you are a very liary man. (*He puts board under his shirt.*) Oh, my heart-secret, wait till I'll hide you from them all, and they not able to understand a thing they are not fit to understand! There's a bad class of people in this place, are not worthy to see so much as your name! I don't want to be annoyed with them any more than I am. I'll keep my knowledge to myself, between myself and the bare stones. I'll go back to the beasts and the birds that pay respect to him!

Hosty: Do so, and it might chance you to see him again, and the full moon working in your head.

Malachi: (*Turning back for a moment as he goes.*) So I will see him again! I'm well able to track him through fire and fair water. And I'll know him when I will see him, and that is what you or the like of you will not do. And another thing. I tell you I'd sooner he not to be in it, than he to be in it, and to be what you are making him out to be! (*Goes.*)

(*Band heard in the distance.*)

Mannion: (*Coming in.*) Here now, I chanced the clerk leaving the door. Here is the Register so far as it goes back, and that is but after the year of the Famine. To go astray the old ones did or some ignorant person that made an end of them. You will find the name you are looking for in this——

Hosty: You will, the same time you will find a hundred goats without damage or roguery.

Mrs. Coppinger: Is it that the clerk said there was in it the name of Hugh O'Lorrha?

Mannion: He did, and he said besides that——

Hosty: A name to be down in the register, it did not get there by itself. I was getting to be in dread he might be some sort of a Jack o' Lanthorn.

Coppinger: What way could he be that, and the country entirely calling their leagues and their hurling clubs by his name? It is not to a

Jack o' Lanthorn I myself would be working out a statue of stone.

Mannion: If you will but listen till I'll tell you what the clerk was saying——

Hosty: Let you sound out now, Darby Costello, whatever may be written in the book.

Costello: (*Giving it to Mrs. Coppinger.*) No, but Mrs. Coppinger. It would take *her* to do that; she that can read out the paper the same as if God put it in her mind.

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Sitting down and opening first page.*) Michael—Michael Morrissey—that's not it—where now was he born?—Bally-rabbitt—he should be father so to the Morrissey is herding for Cunningham.

Hosty: Don't be going through the races and generations now, or you never will make out the name.

Mrs. Coppinger: Thomas Fahy, and after that Joseph Fahy and Peter Fahy——well, they got enough of space in the book, that whole tribe of the Fahys. It is a book for themselves they have a right to be paying for, and not to be taking space that is for the whole of the parish.

Hosty: Go on now, ma'am, go on.

Mrs. Coppinger: Would you believe now here is more of the Fahys. Congregated on the page they are, the same as a flock of stairs.

Hosty: (*Seizing book and turning over pages to the end.*) Make now a second reading—it's best begin at the finish till you'll get shut of them. There's a good deal of the Fahys wore away since that time.

Mrs. Coppinger: It's hard to please you, Brian Hosty, and you so hasty as you are. Here now is the last name in the book if that will satisfy you. What is it? H, Hugh — What will you say now hearing, it is no less than Hugh O'Lorrha?

Costello: The man we are looking for.

Coppinger: (*Looking over Mrs. Coppinger's shoulder.*) So it is too. Sound out the year now, Mary, and the day, the way I will space them in my mind.

Mrs. Coppinger: May the tenth in this year—the day ere yesterday——no but yesterday——

Hosty: It is the year you are reading wrong. What way would a man be getting a monument, and he to be baptized within the last past two days.

Mrs. Coppinger: Reckon it for yourself so, if ever you learned figures on a slate.

Hosty: (*Taking book.*) The year our own year—sure enough, unless there did clouds rise up in my head.

Mannion: It is what the clerk was saying, and you to give me leave to be telling it, there is a man of the Fahys——

Mrs. Coppinger: Have done with your Fahys! Is it that you are saying Hugh O'Lorrha's name was ever Englished into Fahy?

Mannion: A man of the Fahys that is living anear the forge gave his young son, that was baptized yesterday, the name of Hugh O'Lorrha, where he was hearing it belled out through the whole of the district.

Mrs. Coppinger: I'm no way obliged to you, Peter Mannion, for keeping that close the way you did, and all the trouble I am after going to in the search. And what call had he to go tracking after names outside of his own generations and his tribe?

Mannion: It is what the clerk was saying, a young weak little family he has, ten of them there are in it; and he has the names were in his family, or on the best of the Saints, mostly used previously.

Hosty: And as to the real Hugh O'Lorrha, we are as wise as we were at the first.

Coppinger: What are books and what are Registers put beside any person's mind? Come out here now, Peggy Mahon, and tell us what you can tell us, and what we are craving to know.

Hosty: You will get nothing at all out of that one, unless it might be cracked talk and foolishness.

(Peggy comes out and they all crowd around her. She has a cat in her arms, and sits down on the seat outside her door.)

Mrs. Coppinger: Tell us out now, Peggy, all you can tell, about one Hugh O'Lorrha.

Peggy: I am not in humour for talking and for foolishness. The cat that has my tea destroyed, that's all the newses I have. To put his paw in it he did, that I should throw it out of the door. There is no person would drink water or any mortal thing and a cat after touching it, for cats is queer, cats are the queerest things on the face of the globe.

Coppinger: Come on now, Peggy, till I'll question you.

Peggy: The day I wouldn't get my drop of tea I could keep nothing at all in my mind. What call had he to go meddle with it? There is something is not right in cats.

Hosty: Where's the use of questioning her? Giddy she is with age, and it's impossible to keep a head on her.

Mrs. Coppinger: Wait a second and I'll have her coaxed, bringing her out a cup of tea. *(Goes into house.)*

Coppinger: Tell us now, the same as you told Malachi Naughton, all that happened to Hugh O'Lorrha, and that gave him so great a name.

Peggy: Hugh O'Lorrha—Hugh O'Lorrha that was all the name ever he had, and it will be his name ever and always. I heard that since I was remembering, since I had sense or head.

Coppinger: I suppose now it could hardly be yourself, ma'am, befriended him, and he coming into the world?

Peggy: Wasn't that a rogue of a cat now, to go dip his paw down into my tea?

Mrs. Coppinger: (*Coming out with cup of tea.*) Here now, Peggy Mahon, drink a sup of this and it will give you nice courage for a while.

Peggy: (*Turning her shoulder to her.*) What call had you to go saying my own man would not recognise me and I dead? And all the world knows that Him that ordered lights for the day and for the night time, has given out orders for all He will send for, to come before Him in their bloom.

Coppinger: (*Taking cup and offering it to her.*) That is so surely. At thirty years of age and in their bloom. (*Peggy drinks tea.*)

Costello: She won't refuse after that to tell her story, and she knowing it to tell, about Hugh O'Lorrha.

Peggy: I know it, and it's myself does know it. I have a grand little story about him.

Coppinger: Out with it so, ma'am.

Peggy: There was a widow-woman one time, and she is not in it now, and what signifies if she ever was in it at all——

Mrs. Coppinger: That has the sound nearly of the beginning of some ancient vanity.

Coppinger: Have patience now, it is coming.

Peggy: She had but one son only, and the name was on him was Hugh Beg O'Lorrha.

Costello: My dearest life! I was thinking the same thing before. Sure that is a folk-tale my grandfather used to be telling in the years gone by.

Mrs. Coppinger: Can you tell us now at what time did he live?

Peggy: How would I know? I suppose at the time of the giants. He came in one day to his mother. "Go boil a hen for me and bake a cake for me," says he, "till I'll travel as far as the Court and ask the King's daughter."

Costello: I know it through and through. It is nothing at all but a story-teller's yarn.

Coppinger: Is that truth you are saying?

Costello: To the best of my belief I am speaking the truth. I can tell it through to the binding. To take the life he did of the Naked Hangman, that was hid in the egg of a duck.

Mrs. Coppinger: Why didn't you tell us before now, Darby Costello, that you knew Hugh O'Lorrha to be but a deception and an empty tale.

Costello: I was someway shy and fearful to be going against the whole of ye. And sure when we had to believe it, we must believe it.

Hosty: And is it only in the poets' stories he is, and nothing but a name upon the wind? What way did it fail you to know that, Thomas Coppinger, and that Malachi had put his own skin upon the story.

Coppinger: I don't know from Adam's race, unless it was witchcraft and spells and oracles. How well it failed you to find it out yourself.

Mrs. Coppinger: Sure he must have lived in some place, or why would we be putting up a monument to him?

(Band and cars heard nearer.)

Hosty: He lived in no other place but in the Munster poets' lies. It is great ridicule will be put on us now by all that are coming the road.

To jibe at us they will, we to be spending our means upon a man that never was in it at all.

Coppinger: The thing that was to give me my chance to have brought me ruination in the end! Since the Gael was sold at Aughrim there never was such a defeat!

Costello: I'm in dread it's to do violence to us they might. There will always be contrary people in a crowd. It is up to my neck in the tide I would wish to go, the way no person could come near me, or be making attacks on me. (*All sit down disconsolately.*)

Peggy: (*Standing up and giving a delighted laugh.*) Ha, Ha! Ye are defeated, and ye earned defeat! Sure ye know nothing at all. This one running down the fool's man, saying he was made but out of thoughts and of fancies; and this one (*Pointing to Mrs. Coppinger*) running down my own man, saying he was of no use and of no account, and that he was not better, but worse, than any other one.

Mrs. Coppinger: It was you told that to her, Darby Costello, for to make mischief between neighbours were at one.

Costello: If I did it was to raise her heart and to pacify her, where she was fretting with the thought she would not come to him and she dead. But the time I'll go doing comfortable things

again, it's within in my own mind I'll go do them, the way I won't suffer in my skin. Such abuse to . . . be getting! I might as well be a renegade.

Coppinger: Give no heed to them, Peggy, and I myself will carve a slab will do credit to your man, and will keep his name above ground for ever.

Peggy: I will give you no leave to do that! I'll ask no headstone and his name upon it, and strangers maybe to be sounding it out with the queer crabbed talk they have, and the gibberish, and ridiculing it, and maybe making out my clean comrade, my comely Patrick, to be but a blemished little manneen, having a stuttering tongue. (*She goes into cabin and turns at door.*) A queer race ye are, a queer race. It is right Malachi was quitting you, and it was wise. Any person to own a heart secret, it is best for him hide it in the heart. Let the whole world draw near to question me, but I'll be wise this time. I'll say no word of Patrick Mahon, and no word of Hugh Beg O'Lorrha, that is maybe nearer to him than some that are walking this street. Oh yes, oh yes, I'll be wary this time and I'll be wise, very wise. I'll be as wise as the man that didn't tell his dream! (*She goes into her house and shuts door.*)

Mannion: (*Coming in.*) Is it long now since any of ye went to the place the whales landed upon the strand?

Hosty: It would be seventeen times better for themselves and ourselves, those beasts to have stopped browsing where they were, in their pen that is beneath the green ocean.

Coppinger: Hadn't I enough to do planning out the figure and the foundation and the stone? I'd have the day lost visiting them. Monday morning with the help of God, I'll go take a view of them.

Mannion: All the view you are apt to get, is of the seals spits lying on the strand, and of the waves and the wrackage of the sea.

Coppinger: What are you raving about?

Mannion: In the argument the whales went out from ye.

Coppinger: They couldn't stir unknownst to us. What way could they walk, having no legs?

Mannion: The Connemara lads have the oil drawn from the one of them, and the other one was swept away with the spring tide.

Costello: For pity's sake! That cannot be true!

Mannion: It is true, too true to be put in the ballads.

Hosty: It is no mean blow to the place losing them; and to yourself, Thomas Coppinger, and your grand statue swept away along with them.

Costello: Let you not fret, Thomas. There did no badness of misfortune ever come upon Ireland but someone was the better of it. You not to go shape the image, there is no person can say, it is to mis-shape it you did. Let you comfort yourself this time, for it is likely you would have failed doing the job.

Coppinger: I was thinking that myself, Darby. I to begin I'd have to follow it up, and the deer knows where might it leave me.

Mrs. Coppinger: We'll not be scarce of talk for the rest of our years anyway. For some do be telling the story was always in it, but we will be telling the story never was in it before and never will be in it at all!

(The band is heard quite close playing "O'Donell Abu!" Mrs. Coppinger rushes in at door, looks out. Coppinger hides behind headstone. Hosty leaps the wall into Connacht. Costello hides at side of Peggy's house. Only Peter Mannion left in centre. Band quite close and shouts of Hi! for Hugh O'Lorrha!)

CURTAIN

NOTES WRITTEN FOR FIRST EDITION, 1910

TO A CERTAIN EDITOR—"When the 'Image' was produced at the Abbey, I put on the programme a quotation, 'Secretum meum Mihi,' 'My Secret to Myself,' which I had for a while thought of taking as its name. I think from a note in your paper you and some others believed that the secret I wanted to keep was my own, whereas I had but given a 'heart-secret' into the keeping of each of the persons of the play.

"One of the old stories known in the cottages is of a beautiful lady loved by a king's son, who follows her to a garden where they loved and are happy. She has laid on him one condition only: 'You must never wonder at me, or say anything about me at all.' But one day she passed by him in the garden, and when he saw her so beautiful, he turned and said to the gardener: 'There was never a lady so beautiful as mine in the whole world.' 'There never was,' said the gardener, 'and you will be without her now,' he said. And so it happened, and he lost her from that day because he had put his thought about her into common words.

"So it fell out with my old people. Brian Hosty's 'Image' was his native, passionately loved province

of Connacht; but he boasted of it to some who could see its thorns and thistles with passionless eyes, looking over the mering wall. Mrs. Coppinger had her mind set upon America as a place where the joy of life would reach its summit, but that hope is clouded by the derision of one who has been there, and seen but the ugliness about him. Costello thought of an earth all peace, but when he spoke of peace 'they made themselves ready to war.' Thomas Coppinger dreamed of the great monument he would make to some great man, and old Peggy of one made beautiful through long memory and death; and Malachi of one who was beyond and above earthly life. And each of these images crumbled at the touch of reality, like a wick that has escaped the flame, and is touched by common air. And the more ecstatic the vision the more impossible its realisation until that time when, after the shadows of earth, the seer shall 'awake and be satisfied.'

"You are certainly proud of what your paper has done to bring back respect for the work of Irish hands. But I wonder if it is all you intended it to be when you wrote in a little book I edited ten years ago of a 'new Ireland rising up out of the foundations of the old, with love and not hate as its inspiration?' For you also have been an Image-maker. The Directors of our Theatre are beginning to get some applause, even in Dublin, for its success, but only they know how far it still is from the idea with which they set out. And so with my sisters' sons, to whom I have dedicated..... this play. One brought together the Conference..... that did so much towards the peaceable and friendly

changing of land ownership. The other has made Dublin the Orient of all—artists or learners or critics, who value the great modern school of French painting. Yet I fancy it was a dream beyond possible realisation that gave each of them the hard patience needed by those who build, and the courage needed by the ‘Disturber’ who does not often escape some knocks and buffetings. But if the dreamer had never tried to tell the dream that had come across him, even though to ‘betray his secret to the multitude’ must shatter his own perfect vision, the world would grow clogged and dull with the weight of flesh and of clay. And so we must say ‘God love you’ to the Image-makers, for do we not live by the shining of those scattered fragments of their dream?

“I do not know if I should have written this ‘apology’ at the first playing of ‘the Image,’ or if I ought to leave it unwritten now. For after all, those enjoy it most who say in what I think is your own formula—‘this is what Lady Gregory calls a comedy, but everybody else calls a farce.’”

* * * *

I owe an acknowledgment as well as many thanks to A. E., who gave me the use of an idea that had come to him for a play, which he had no thought of carrying out. It was about a man who collected money in a country town for a monument to one Michael M’Carthy Ward, I forget on what grounds. The money is collected, the collector disappears, and then only it is found that Michael M’Carthy Ward had never existed at all. I meant to carry this out

in the manner of "Spreading the News" or "The Jackdaw," but the "Image" took the matter into its own hands, and whether for good or ill-luck, the three-act play has grown. I think I have not quite failed, yet it also is not what I set out to do.

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It was after the play had been written that an old man strolling out from Gort one Sunday talked of O'Connell. "There is a nice monument put up to him in Ennis," he said. "In a corner it is of the middle of the street, and himself high up on it, holding a book. It was a poor shoemaker set that going. I saw him in Gort one time; a coat of O'Connell's he had that he chanced in some place. Only for him there would be no monument; it was he gathered money for it, and there was none would refuse him." And still later, this spring, I went to see the Hill of Tara, and I was told that the statue of Saint Patrick on it "was made by a mason—a common mason. If it wasn't that he had made it, and had it ready, and was a poor man, it would not have been put up." So the ambitions of Malachi Naughton and Thomas Coppinger have not been without ancestry.

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